

By Paul Schemm

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/04/AR2010020401126.html>

Leonard Leo, the chairman of the **U.S. government's Commission on International Religious Freedom**, said the State Department is "very worried about increased violence against Christians in Upper Egypt."

"There are quite a number of laws in Egypt which blatantly discriminate against Christians and other religious minorities in a way that creates a climate where people don't respect Christians," he told Fox News on Jan. 28.

In its splendid isolation at the foot of mountains surrounded by the crisp desert air, the monastery seems far away from troubles elsewhere. In a sign of its turbulent past, one of the restored buildings is a tall tower only accessible by a wooden drawbridge, where the monks would take refuge during assaults by hostile Bedouin tribes in the Middle Ages.

"We are living in the same land, drinking the same water—we are Egyptians, all of us. What is going on is something not normal," said Father Maximus about the shooting in Nag Hamadi.